

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

LIMITED DISTRIBUTION

DATE: June 25, 1950

SUBJECT: Korean Situation

PARTICIPANTS: The President

Secretary Acheson
 Secretary Johnson
 Secretary Matthews

Secretary Pace
 Secretary Finletter
 General Bradley
 Admiral Sherman
 General Vandenberg
 General Collins

COPIES FOR

Mr. Webb
 Mr. Rusk
 Mr. Hickerson
 Mr. Jessup

} State
 } Dept.

The persons listed above met with the President for dinner at Blair House at 7:45 PM. Before dinner General Bradley read a memorandum prepared by General MacArthur in which he emphasized his views about the importance of denying Formosa to the Communists.

After dinner the discussion began around the table. The President called on the Secretary of State to open the discussion.

MR. ACHESON summarized the various problems which he thought the President should consider. The first point was the question of authorizing General MacArthur to supply Korea with arms and other equipment over and above the supplies of ammunition presently authorized under the MDAP program. He recommended that this be done. He suggested that our air cover should be used to aid in the evacuation of the women and children from Seoul and that our air force should be authorized to knock out northern Korean tanks or airforce interfering with the evacuation. He then mentioned the resolution adopted by the Security Council and suggested that consideration should be given to what

further

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1. O. 1002, Sec. 2(e) and 3(d) or (2)
 2. D. 1002, Sec. 2(e) or (2)
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By NLT, NARS Date 6-11-76

TOP SECRET

~~TOP SECRET~~



- 2 -

further assistance we might render to Korea in pursuance of this or a supplementary Security Council resolution. He next suggested that the President should order the Seventh Fleet to proceed to Formosa and prevent an attack on Formosa from the mainland. At the same time operations from Formosa against the mainland should be prevented. He said that he did not recommend that General MacArthur should go to Formosa until further steps had been decided upon. He said that the United States should not tie up with the Generalissimo. He thought that the future status of Formosa might be determined by the UN.

THE PRESIDENT interposed "or by the Japanese Peace Treaty".

MR. ACHESON finally suggested that our aid to Indochina should be stepped up.

GENERAL BRADLEY said that we must draw the line somewhere.

THE PRESIDENT stated he agreed on that.

GENERAL BRADLEY said that Russia is not yet ready for war. The Korean situation offered as good an occasion for action in drawing the line as anywhere else and he agreed with the actions suggested by Mr. Acheson. He said that jets flying over her would have a great morale effect on the South Koreans even if they were unable to spot the North Korean tanks. He said that naval action could help on the East Coast. He questioned the value of sending materiel which the Koreans were not trained to use. He mentioned the F-51's in this connection. He said that we should act under the guise of aid to the United Nations. He proposed that we should move fleet units now in Subb Bay. He thought it would probable not be necessary for them to shoot but that they might frighten off the North Korean amphibious forces. He questioned the advisability of putting in ground units particularly if large numbers were involved.

GENERAL COLLINS reported on a telecon with Tokyo. General MacArthur is shipping the mortars, artillery, and so on with ammunition. These supplies will reach the Koreans within the ten-day period for which they already have supplies. The F-51's are available in Japan for Korean pilots to fly back. The Korean pilots will be flown from Kimpo. General Collins urged that authority be given MacArthur to send a survey group to Korea.

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E. O. 12958, Sec. 1(5) and 1(4) or (3)

Dep. of State Instr. 22-2975

By NLT: NARS Date 6-11-76

ADMIRAL SHERMAN

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~



- 3 -

ADMIRAL SHERMAN said that the Russians do not want war now but if they do they will have it. The present situation in Korea offers a valuable opportunity for us to act. Korea is a strategic threat to Japan; this was the conclusion which he reached in his studies during the war when we were planning our attacks on Japan. He favored sending a survey group from Tokyo and increasing the strength of KMAG. He thought we should stop the use of the sea as a means of attack on South Korea. This was the logical corollary of the views stated by the Secretary of State. On Formosa he thought we must adjust our position to our general occupation position in Japan. He thought that MacArthur fitted into that situation as SCAP. He agreed, as had General Bradley, that in the Formosa operation we must apply our guarantees against military action both ways, that is to prevent attacks from Formosa as well as on Formosa. We could not otherwise justify our action. He said it would take two days to bring the fleet up from the Philippines. It need not be used if we decided against such action but the movement should be ordered now. He wished also to move some ships from the mainland as far as Pearl Harbor, for example, at least one carrier.

THE PRESIDENT asked about Russian fleet strength in the Far East and Admiral Sherman gave him the details.

GENERAL VANDENBERG agreed that we must stop the North Koreans but he would not base our action on the assumption that the Russians would not fight. He said that we could knock out the North Korean tanks with our air if only the North Korean air force is involved. However, Russian jets might come into action and they would be operating from much closer bases. In regard to Formosa he pointed out that all places were interrelated. Formosa was therefore important only in relation to other places.

THE PRESIDENT asked about Russian air strength in the Far East.

GENERAL VANDENBERG gave him the information including the fact that a considerable number of Russian jets are based on Shanghai.

THE PRESIDENT asked whether we could knock out their bases in the Far East.

GENERAL

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Dep. of State letter, 12 APR 73

By 10.Y. 11/11/00, NARS Data 6/1/76

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 4 -



GENERAL VANDENBERG replied that this might take some time. He said it could be done if we used A-Bombs.

MR. PACE expressed doubts about the advisability of putting ground forces into Korea. He stressed the need for speed and for encouraging General MacArthur to take action.

MR. MATTHEWS also stressed the need for prompt action and said that we would get popular approval.

MR. FINLETTER said we should go as far as necessary in protecting our evacuation. He expressed some doubt on the additional items which had been suggested by the Secretary of State. He said our forces in the Far East were sufficient if the Russians do not come in. He advised that only the necessary decisions be made that night. He thought that General MacArthur should be authorized to go beyond mere evacuation. He stressed the analogy to the situation between the two world wars. He thought we should take calculated risks hoping that our action will keep the peace.

MR. JOHNSON agreed with Mr. Acheson's first recommendation concerning instructions to General MacArthur but thought the instructions should be detailed so as not to give him too much discretion. He thought there should not be a real delegation of Presidential authority to General MacArthur. He mentioned the three islands south of Okinawa in the Ryukyus which could be made ready in a few days as air bases. He pointed to the fact that they are already under our jurisdiction and said that the Formosan situation could be handled from them. He agreed with the views that had been expressed by Mr. Finletter. He was opposed to committing ground troops in Korea.

MR. WEBB, MR. JESSUP, MR. RUSK and MR. HICKERSON made brief comments in amplification of Mr. Acheson's statements.

THE PRESIDENT confirmed his decision that the following orders should be sent:

1. General MacArthur was to send the suggested supplies to the Koreans.
2. General MacArthur was to send a survey group to Korea.

3. The

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E. O. 11652, Sec. 1(b) and 1(c) or (d)

Dep. of State letter, 12-29-74

By NLT: HC NARS Date 6/1/76

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 5 -



3. The indicated elements of the fleet were to be sent to Japan.
4. The Air Force should prepare plans to wipe out all Soviet air bases in the Far East. This was not an order for action but an order to make the plans.
5. Careful calculation should be made of the next probable place in which Soviet action might take place. A complete survey should be made by State and Defense Departments.

He stressed that we are working entirely for the United Nations. We would wait for further action until the UN order is flouted.

He wished the State Department to prepare a statement for a message for him to deliver in person to Congress on Tuesday indicating exactly what steps had been taken. He wished the Department to put its best brains on it and said that there were plenty of them there.

He said he was not yet ready to put MacArthur in as Commander-in-Chief in Korea.

He said our action at this moment would be confined to the United Nations and to Korea.

He said that our air was to continue to give cover for evacuation destroying tanks if necessary.

He asked whether more bazookas and possibly recoilless rifles could be sent.

GENERAL BRADLEY said that on the recoilless rifles we had few available and that there was also a shortage of ammunition.

THE PRESIDENT again emphasized the importance of making the survey of possible next moves by the Soviet Union. He also emphasized that no statement whatever was to be made by any one to the press until he speaks on Tuesday. It was absolutely vital that there should be no leak in regard to this matter and he wished everyone to be careful. They should not even make any background comment to the press.

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E. O. 12958, Sec. 1(f) and 1(g) at (2)
Dpt. of State letter, 12-12-77
By JLT-~~HC~~ NARS Date 6-11-78

MR. ACHESON

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 6 -

MR. ACHESON pointed out that he and Secretary Johnson were scheduled to appear before the Congressional Appropriations Committee tomorrow and wondered whether any statements should be made on the Korean situation. The President said that he thought no comment on this question should be made by either of the Secretaries at that time.

ADMIRAL SHERMAN inquired whether he had been authorized to move fleet units from California to Pearl Harbor.

THE PRESIDENT said that he was.

In response to further questions THE PRESIDENT said that our air cover should take action against North Korean tanks if this were necessary.



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E. O. 11652, Sec. 1(j) and 5(D) or (f)

D. pr. of State letter, 12-29-75

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S/AFJ Jessup:mtb

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